CRIME
NO. 16
APR-MAY
10¢
CRIME SUSPENSTORIES
JOLTING TALES OF TENSION IN THE EC TRADITION!

RENDEZVOUS!

THIS IS LAS VEGAS, NEVADA... A CITY CROUCHING IN THE DESERT, COWERING FROM THE SUN. BY NIGHT IT BECOMES A ROARING, ROLLICKING GAMBLING TOWN WHERE WINE, MONEY AND EMOTIONS ALL FLOW FREELY. BUT GRADUALLY, AS THE DAWN APPEARS AND THE ANGRY SUN AGAIN SEARS THE CITY, THE GAIETY AND ABANDON GIVE WAY TO A DIFFERENT LAS VEGAS... A NORMAL, EVERYDAY CITY WITH NORMAL, EVERYDAY PEOPLE LIVING THEIR NORMAL, EVERYDAY LIVES...

YOU'VE GOT YOUR RECEIPT FOR A QUARTER'S WORTH, JOE HAINES, SO YOU STEP BACK, LISTENING TO THE OTHERS JOKE AND LAUGH. YOU CHUCKLE...

COLLINS ISN'T IN TODAY, SO I'LL PUT UP HIS SHARE!

OKAY! OKAY! DON'T RUSH ME!

MINUTES LATER, THE RECEIPTS HAVE ALL BEEN HANDED OUT, AND GRADUALLY THE CROWD AROUND CHARLIE'S DESK BEGINS TO THIN. YOU AMBLE OVER TO YOUR DESK AND SIT DOWN, TOYING WITH THE NAMEPLATE...

MR. HAINES... WHAT WAS CHARLIE DOING? TAKING BETS?

OH, NO... CHARLIE'S GOING ON A TRIP BY AIRPLANE! THE BOYS WERE ALL TAKING OUT INSURANCE! JUST AN OFFICE GAG!

I DON'T QUITE SEE...

WELL, IT'S LIKE THIS! A LOT OF PEOPLE THINK THERE'S TOO MUCH *RISK* CONNECTED WITH FLYING, SO AIRLINE COMPANIES TRY TO *LESSEN* THE RISK FINANCIALLY BY LETTING THEIR PASSENGERS TAKE OUT A GREAT AMOUNT OF *INSURANCE* FOR THE TRIP!

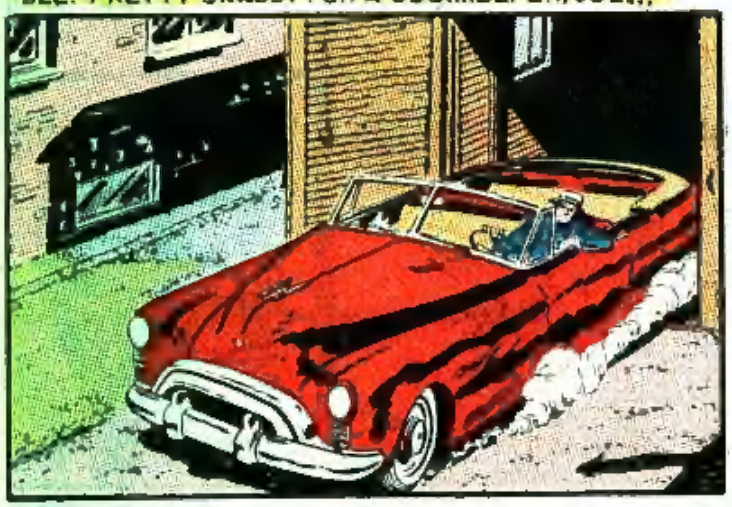
EACH PASSENGER CAN PURCHASE *$5,000* WORTH OF INSURANCE FOR ONLY *TWENTY-FIVE CENTS*, WITH THE MAXIMUM AMOUNT BEING *$50,000* FOR ONLY *TWO DOLLARS AND FIFTY CENTS!* CHARLIE TOOK *$15,000* FOR HIS WIFE, SO WE BOUGHT UP THE REST! IF HE SHOULD HAVE AN ACCIDENT... *WE'D COLLECT!*

I THINK THAT'S POSITIVELY *VICIOUS!* IT'S *SADISTIC!* ALL OF YOU WAITING LIKE VULTURES, HOPING THERE WILL BE AN ACCIDENT! HOW CAN YOU BE SO... SO *MERCINARY* WITH A PERSON'S LIFE?!

LOOK, RUBY, DON'T GET EXCITED OVER IT! WE DON'T CARE ABOUT THE *MONEY!* IT'S JUST A LITTLE OFFICE GAG!

A GLANCE AT THE WALL CLOCK ENDS THE SITUATION... IT'S TIME TO GO HOME! YOU LEAVE THE BUILDING, SLIDE BEHIND THE WHEEL OF YOUR OUTDATED CAR, AND DRIVE AWAY. YOU HATE TO DRIVE THE MISERABLE-LOOKING HEAP, BUT IT'S NECESSARY, ISN'T IT, JOE? A BOOKKEEPER DOESN'T MAKE MUCH MONEY...

YOU PARK YOUR CAR OUTSIDE THE RUN-DOWN HOUSE WHERE YOU LIVE AND GO UPSTAIRS TO CHANGE YOUR CLOTHES! AN HOUR LATER YOU ENTER YOUR PRIVATE GARAGE AND DRIVE OFF IN A SHINY NEW CONVERTIBLE! PRETTY SNAZZY FOR A BOOKKEEPER, JOE...



YOU TRAVEL TO THE SUBURBS SURROUNDING LAS VEGAS, AND BRAKE YOUR CAR IN THE DRIVEWAY OF A MODERN, EXPENSIVE HOME. A LUSCIOUS, BLONDE WOMAN OPENS THE DOOR READILY! THESE, TOO, ARE PRETTY SNAZZY ON A BOOKKEEPER'S SALARY, JOE...

YOU THROW A LOT OF MONEY AROUND FOR A PERSON WHO'S ONLY THE HEAD OF A BOOKKEEPING DEPARTMENT, JOE! WHERE'S THE MONEY COME FROM?

OH, SAY, JOE! I WANT TO SPEAK TO YOU! RATHER IMPORTANT!

WHY, CERTAINLY, MR. HOLMES! WHAT IS IT?

THIS IS STRICTLY CONFIDENTIAL, JOE, BUT I'VE BEEN GETTING SUSPICIOUS LATELY OF THE WAY THE ACCOUNTS LOOK!

SUSPICIOUS? WHA... WHAT SEEMS TO BE THE TROUBLE?

I'M NOT SURE, BUT I'VE BEEN GIVING THE BOOKS A LIGHT CHECK-UP... AND SOMETHING SMELLS FISHY!

OH?

I THINK ONE OF THE MEN IN YOUR DEPARTMENT IS TRYING TO SWINDLE THE FIRM!

IT SEEMS HARD TO BELIEVE! I HADN'T NOTICED ANYTHING!

I KNOW, BUT I'M GOING ON A TRIP, SO I WANT YOU TO KEEP YOUR EYES OPEN!

OF COURSE, MR. HOLMES! ER... MAY I ASK WHERE YOU ARE GOING?

I'VE BEEN CALLED TO OUR MAIN OFFICE IN 'FRISCO! WHEN I RETURN, I'LL AUDIT THE BOOKS THOROUGHLY, AND WE'LL KNOW JUST WHO THE CULPRIT IS!

I UNDERSTAND! AND I'LL BE SURE TO STAY ON THE ALERT. ER... WHEN ARE YOU LEAVING?

TONIGHT AT 9:35! FLIGHT 17!

OH... I SEE! I SEE!

WHY ARE YOU SWEATING, JOE? WHY ARE YOU SUDDENLY SICK AND NERVOUS?
I CAN'T LET HIM AUDIT THE BOOKS! HE'LL FIND OUT I'M THE ONE WHO'S EMBEZZLING FUNDS! MAYBE HE KNOWS ALREADY! I'VE GOT TO DO SOMETHING!

SO THAT'S HOW YOU ACQUIRED THE CONVERTIBLE, EH, JOE? THAT'S HOW YOU GOT THE MONEY TO PAY OFF YOUR GIRL'S HOME! WELL, YOU'RE IN TROUBLE NOW... WHAT ARE YOU GOING TO DO ABOUT IT?
ER... MR. HOLMES, ARE YOU GOING TO TAKE OUT ANY OF THAT AIRLINE INSURANCE FOR YOUR WIFE AND FAMILY?
WHY, YES, JOE! $10,000! WHY? WANT TO BUY A SHARE? HA! HA, HA, HA!

HEH, HEH! WELL, YOU'RE ENTITLED TO $50,000, MR. HOLMES, SO SINCE THE BOYS AREN'T HERE, I'LL BUY UP THE OTHER $40,000! I WANT TO GET RICH QUICK!
HA, HA! SURE, JOE! BOY, YOU'RE A CARD!

YOU HAND HIM THE TWO DOLLARS, AND SHAKILY ACCEPT THE RECEIPT...
SAY, JOE! WHAT'S THE MATTER? YOU DON'T LOOK SO GOOD!
...FEEL... KINDA SICK! I THINK... I'D BETTER GO HOME!

GOOD IDEA! YOU DO THAT! TAKE THE DAY OFF!
THANK YOU, MR. HOLMES! I... I'M SURE I'LL BE ALL RIGHT BY TOMORROW!

YOU DRIVE HOME QUICKLY! A PLAN HAS FORMED IN YOUR MIND... BUT YOU'VE GOT TO HURRY! TIME IS SHORT! YOU LIFT THE TELEPHONE AND TWIRL THE DIAL...
HELLO, NATIONAL AIRLINES? COULD YOU TELL ME HOW FAST YOUR PASSENGER PLANES TRAVEL WHEN...
WHAZZAT? AT AN AVERAGE SPEED OF 250 MILES AN HOUR? I SEE! THANK YOU!

YOU TAKE OUT A MAP... AND FOR A LONG WHILE YOU REMAIN BUSY... THINKING... FIGURING... PLANNING...
LET'S SEE, NOW! TWO HOURS... 200... 250 MILES AN HOUR... STRAIGHT LINE TO 'FRISCO...
AH! JUST ABOUT HERE! IN THE DESSERT! GOOD!

YOU RUSH DOWNSTAIRS TO YOUR CELLAR WORKSHOP AND IN THE DIM LIGHT, YOU WORK FEVERISHLY FOR MANY HOURS...

...AND WHEN AT LAST YOU'RE DONE, BEFORE YOU SITS AN ORDINARY SUITCASE... BUT ITS INSIDES ARE SINISTER AND WICKED! THE SUITCASE CONTAINS A HOME-MADE *TIME BOMB!*
GETTING LATE! FINISHED JUST IN TIME!

WITH THE DEADLY SUITCASE SITTING BESIDE YOU, YOU DRIVE ACROSS TOWN TO MR. HOLMES HOUSE...
HE'S CERTAIN TO BE HOME FROM THE OFFICE BY NOW, IF HE'S GOING TO CATCH THE 9:35 PLANE!

JOE HAINES! WELL, THIS *IS* A SURPRISE!
I'M SORRY TO BOTHER YOU, MR. HOLMES, BUT I REMEMBERED I HAD THIS SUITCASE WHICH BELONGS TO TOM GALLAGHER IN OUR 'FRISCO OFFICE, AND I THOUGHT...

SURE! SURE! I'LL BE GLAD TO GIVE IT TO HIM! SAY, I DON'T MEAN TO RUSH YOU, BUT I'M RIGHT IN THE MIDDLE OF...
OH, THAT'S ALL RIGHT, MR. HOLMES! I KNOW YOU HAVE A LOT TO DO! ER... HAVE... HAVE A SAFE TRIP!

HA! HA! HA! DON'T SAY THAT! IF NOTHING HAPPENS TO ME, JOE, YOU'LL *NEVER* COLLECT YOUR *$40,000* INSURANCE! *HA! HA!*
HA, HA, HA! YES... YES, I KNOW!

YOU SLUMP BEHIND THE WHEEL, NERVOUS AND VERY TIRED. WITH A TREMBLING HAND YOU WIPE THE DROPS OF COLD SWEAT FROM YOUR FOREHEAD...
OH, LORD... I NEVER THOUGHT I'D BE ABLE TO GO THROUGH WITH IT! (GASP) I'VE GOT TO GET STARTED! ... LONG DRIVE AHEAD!

YOU SPEED ALONG THE HIGHWAY OUT THROUGH THE DESERT COUNTRY WEST OF LAS VEGAS... AND FINALLY, AFTER SEVERAL WEARY HOURS, YOU TURN OFF...
IF MY CALCULATIONS ARE CORRECT, THE CRASH WILL TAKE PLACE NEAR HERE!
IT'S RISKY BEING OUT HERE, JOE, BUT YOU HAVE TO BE CERTAIN NO EVIDENCE WILL BE FOUND... AND YOU MUST MAKE ABSOLUTELY SURE MR. HOLMES DOESN'T SURVIVE! YOU LIGHT A CIGARETTE...
HERE IT COMES!
HIGH IN THE PITCH-BLACK SKY YOU SEE THE RED AND GREEN WING-LIGHTS SLYLY WINKING AT YOU! THE DRONE OF THE ENGINES CARRIES EASILY THROUGH THE SILENT NIGHT...
A COOL BREEZE STIRS AND CHILLS THE PERSPIRATION ON YOUR FACE! AN INVOLUNTARY SHUDDER RUNS THROUGH YOUR BODY... AND THE ENGINE NOISE GROWS LOUDER AS THE PLANE DRAWS CLOSER...
ANY MINUTE, NOW! ANY MINUTE!
YOU BITE YOUR LIP, WAITING! YOU TASTE THE BLOOD IN YOUR MOUTH, AND ALMOST UNCONSCIOUSLY FEEL IT TRICKLE DOWN YOUR CHIN! YOU CAN SEE THE WING-LIGHTS CLEARLY...
IT'S GOT TO HAPPEN NOW! IT'S GOT TO!
ANOTHER MINUTE AND IT WILL BE OVERHEAD! ARE YOU SURE YOU PLANNED CORRECTLY, JOE? COULD SOMETHING HAVE GONE WRONG? MAYBE MR. HOLMES FORGOT TO BRING THE SUITCASE!
NO! NO! IT'S GOT TO GO OFF! IT'S GOT TO!
VRROOOM!
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LIKE A BIRD SUDDENLY STOPPED IN MID-FLIGHT BY A HUNTER'S BULLET, THE AIRLINER RIPS OPEN! GREAT SHEETS OF FLAME GUSHING FROM THE CABIN ILLUMINATE TINY HUMANS CLAWING DESPERATELY AT NOTHINGNESS! YOU JUMP INTO YOUR CAR...

IT'S DROPPING ALMOST STRAIGHT DOWN! I'D BETTER GET OUT OF HERE!

YOUR FOOT SLAMS DOWN ON THE STARTER! ONCE, TWICE! A HALF DOZEN TIMES! *NOTHING HAPPENS!*

C'MON! C'MON! START!

FRANTICALLY, YOU LEAP FROM THE CAR AND RACE AWAY! BUT THE ROAR OF THE PLANE'S ENGINES SEEMS TO COME FROM EVERYWHERE!

RRRR ROOOMM RR-RRRR

SUDDENLY, THE PLANE'S LANDING LIGHTS BLAZE, BLINDING YOU WITH THEIR DAZZLING BRILLIANCE! YOU RUN, RABBIT-LIKE, IN CIRCLES... TERRIFIED AND CONFUSED!

HELP! WHERE CAN I GO? PLEASE! STOP! PLEASE!

YOU'RE PARALYZED WITH FEAR, JOE, STRICKEN IMMOBILE, LIKE A WAX STATUE... YOUR BRAIN, UNABLE TO THINK... YOUR BODY, UNABLE TO MOVE! YOU STAND THERE, RIGID... SCREAMING, AS THE LIGHTS BEAR DOWN...

C-CRRAASH!

FOR SEVERAL MOMENTS, PARTICLES OF WRECKAGE FALL FROM THE SKY, AND THEN THERE IS DEATHLY SILENCE! YOU DON'T HAVE TO WORRY ABOUT THERE BEING ANY EVIDENCE. THERE ISN'T MUCH LEFT OF THE PLANE, THE SUITCASE... OR EVEN MR. HOLMES... COME TO THINK OF IT, JOE... THERE ISN'T MUCH LEFT OF *YOU* EITHER...

-THE END-

FISSION BAIT!

WHEN THE FIRST ATOM BOMB WAS EXPLODED AT ALAMAGORDO, NEW MEXICO, BACK IN 1945, IT CHANGED A GREAT MANY THINGS. THE HISTORY OF THE WORLD HAD CHANGED. WE'D ENTERED THE ATOMIC AGE. THE LIVES OF THOUSANDS OF PEOPLE IN NAGASAKI AND HIROSHIMA WERE AFFECTED. THEY'D FELT THE MONSTROUS GIANT'S WRATH. AND IN AMERICA, IN A SMALL TOWN IN CALIFORNIA...

EDDIE! EDDIE! LOOK, HONEY! THE WAR'S OVER! IT'S OVER!

WHERE? LET'S SEE!

YES, EVEN IN THAT SMALL TOWN IN CALIFORNIA, EDDIE MILLER FELT THE RESULTS OF THE ADVENT OF THE ATOMIC AGE...

SEE? THE JAPANESE ARE SUING FOR PEACE. ISN'T THAT WONDERFUL?

YEAH. WONDERFUL.

THE ATOM BOMB MEANT A GREAT DEAL TO A GREAT MANY PEOPLE. TO AMERICAN BOYS IN JAPAN AND EUROPE, IT MEANT THEY'D BE COMING HOME. TO THE JAPANESE, IT MEANT UNCONDITIONAL SURRENDER! BUT TO EDDIE MILLER, IT MEANT..

S'MATTER, EDDIE? AREN'T YOU PLEASED? THE WAR'S OVER! NO MORE KILLING! NO MORE..

NO MORE DOUGH! THE ARMY'LL BE CANCELLING ITS CONTRACTS!

EDDIE MILLER OWNED A SMALL MACHINE SHOP. BEFORE THE WAR, HE AND HIS WIFE LOUISE HAD HAD IT PRETTY TOUGH. WITH THE BOMBING OF PEARL HARBOR, THE LATHES AND DRILL-PRESSES IN EDDIE'S LITTLE SHOP HAD BEGUN TO HUM. HE'D BEEN BUSY DOING WAR-WORK ...SMALL SUB-CONTRACT WORK FOR THE ARMY. BUT NOW, WITH THE WAR'S END, IT MEANT..

THE PARTY'S OVER, LOUISE.

WE'LL BE ALL RIGHT, EDDIE! WE'VE PUT AWAY A LITTLE. IT'LL TIDE US OVER TILL YOU CAN START TURNING OUT CIVILIAN JOBS AGAIN.

AND THEN, EARLY IN 1946, EDDIE MILLER HAD A VISITOR

MY NAME'S FORBES... COLONEL ANDREW FORBES... ARMY PROCUREMENT! ARE YOU MR. EDWARD MILLER?

THAT'S ME...

YOU TURNED OUT A SMALL FUSE CASING FOR US DURING THE WAR, DID YOU NOT? ONE LIKE THIS?

YEAH! THAT'S IT! I HAD A SMALL QUOTA YOU SEE MY SHOP ISN'T TOO BIG!

THE ARMY HAS EXAMINED THESE FUSE CASINGS, MR. MILLER, AND HAS DECIDED TO AWARD YOU A VERY IMPORTANT CONTRACT!

NO KIDDIN'! SAY, I SURE COULD USE SOME BUSINESS!

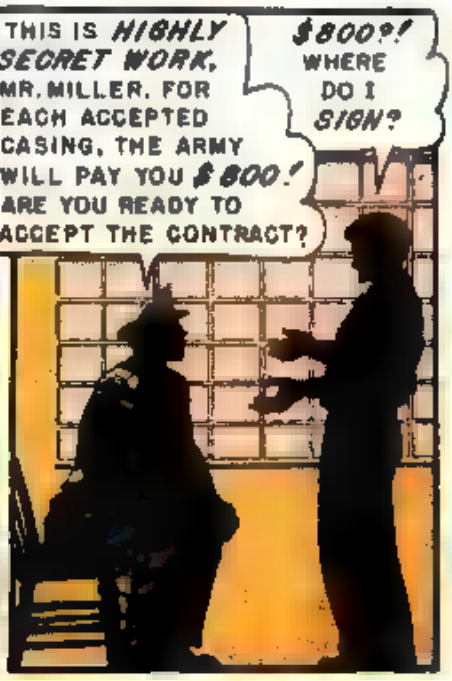
AS I SAID, MR. MILLER, THIS IS A VERY IMPORTANT CONTRACT! WE THINK YOU'RE THE MAN. THE ARMY NEEDS A SMALL NUMBER OF CASINGS SIMILAR TO THIS ONE. I'D SAY ROUGHLY, ABOUT THIRTY A MONTH...

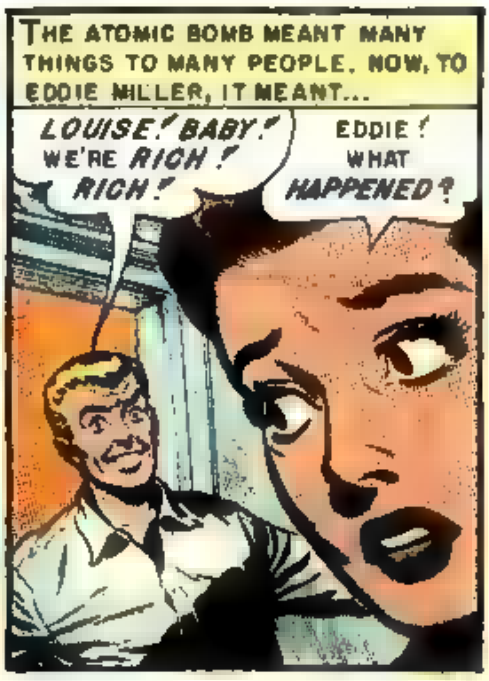
THIRTY? SAY I TURNED OUT TWENTY A DAY BACK IN '44...

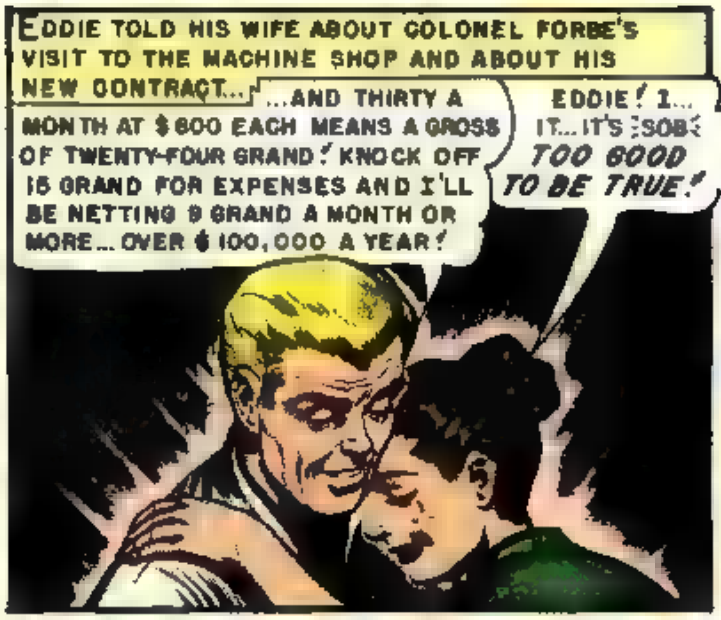
I SAID SIMILAR, MR. MILLER. THESE NEW CASINGS MUST BE PERFECT! WE CAN ALLOW NO TOLERANCE IN THE SPECIFICATIONS! ABSOLUTELY NONE!

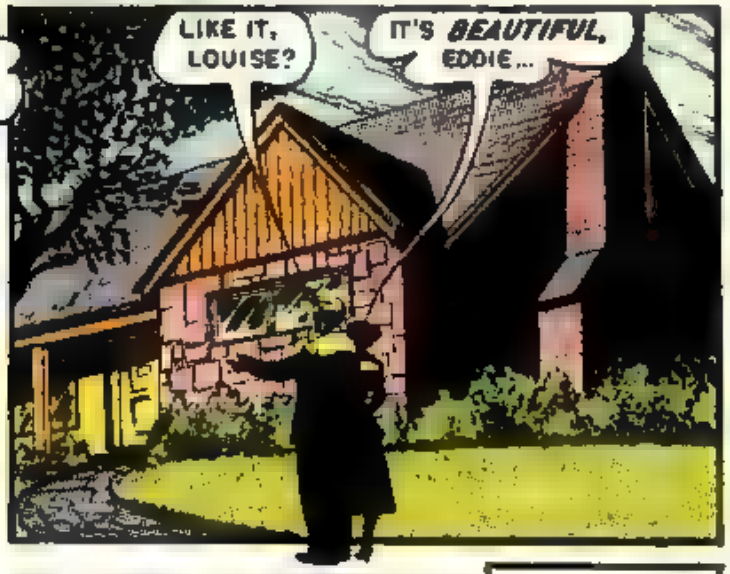
BUT... BUT THAT'LL MEAN PLENTY OF REJECTS, COLONEL! DURING THE WAR WE HAD A TWO HUNDREDTH OF AN INCH LEE-WAY...

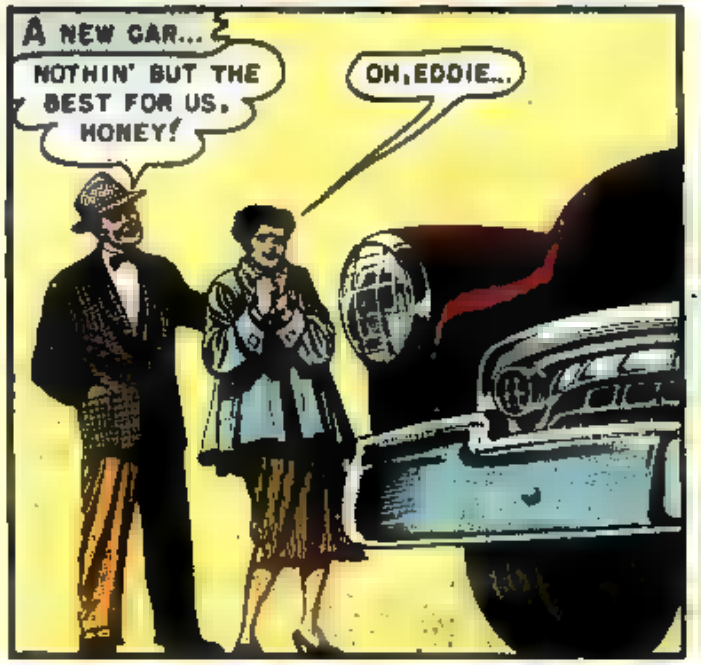
THAT WAS DURING THE WAR, MR. MILLER. THOSE FUSE CASINGS WERE FOR MORTAR SHELLS. THESE NEW CASINGS WILL BE FOR ATOMIC BOMBS! THEY MUST BE PERFECT!
ATOMIC BOMBS!?

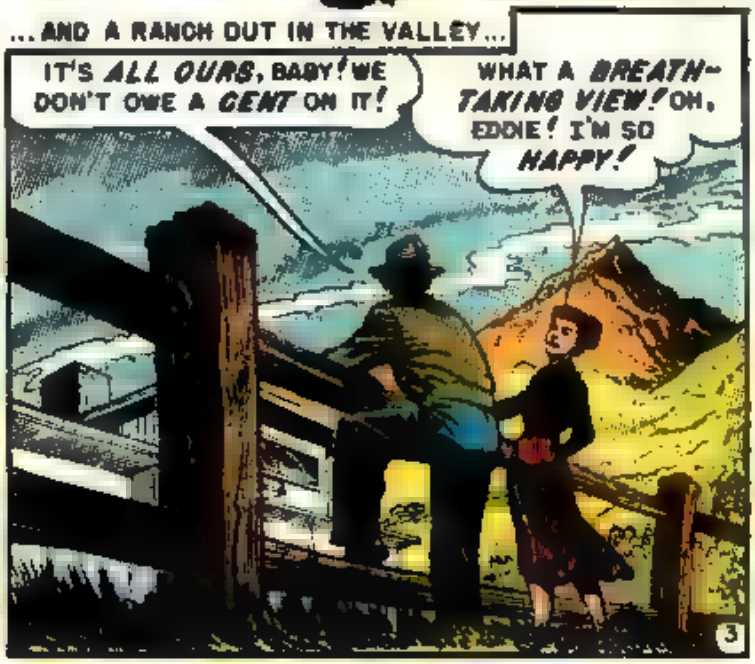

THIS IS HIGHLY SECRET WORK, MR. MILLER. FOR EACH ACCEPTED CASING, THE ARMY WILL PAY YOU $800! ARE YOU READY TO ACCEPT THE CONTRACT?
$800?! WHERE DO I SIGN?


THE ATOMIC BOMB MEANT MANY THINGS TO MANY PEOPLE. NOW, TO EDDIE MILLER, IT MEANT...
LOUISE! BABY! WE'RE RICH! RICH!
EDDIE! WHAT HAPPENED?


EDDIE TOLD HIS WIFE ABOUT COLONEL FORBE'S VISIT TO THE MACHINE SHOP AND ABOUT HIS NEW CONTRACT...
...AND THIRTY A MONTH AT $800 EACH MEANS A GROSS OF TWENTY-FOUR GRAND! KNOCK OFF 15 GRAND FOR EXPENSES AND I'LL BE NETTING 9 GRAND A MONTH OR MORE... OVER $100,000 A YEAR!
EDDIE! I... IT... IT'S TOO GOOD TO BE TRUE!


AND IN LESS THAN A YEAR, EDDIE MILLER HAD BOUGHT A NEW HOME...
LIKE IT, LOUISE?
IT'S BEAUTIFUL, EDDIE...


A NEW CAR...
NOTHIN' BUT THE BEST FOR US, HONEY!
OH, EDDIE...


...AND A RANCH OUT IN THE VALLEY...
IT'S ALL OURS, BABY! WE DON'T OWE A CENT ON IT!
WHAT A BREATH-TAKING VIEW! OH, EDDIE! I'M SO HAPPY!

IN 1949, EDDIE MILLER CELEBRATED HIS FORTY-THIRD BIRTHDAY. THE STEPPED-UP ATOMIC ARMAMENT PROGRAM HAD MEANT MORE ORDERS FOR HIM. HIS SMALL MACHINE SHOP HAD GROWN TO A LARGE PLANT.

GOOD MORNING, MR. MILLER.

GOOD MORNING, MR. MILLER.

MORNIN'!

LIFE WAS GOOD TO EDDIE MILLER. ON WEEKENDS HE LOLLED BESIDE THE SWIMMING POOL HE'D ADDED TO HIS VALLEY HOME...

GOT TO FLY DOWN TO L.A. THIS WEEK, LOUISE. *BUSINESS*. I MAY NOT BE *BACK* BY NEXT WEEKEND.

THAT'S ALL RIGHT, EDDIE. I'VE INVITED A FEW *GUESTS* UP.

IT WAS IN LOS ANGELES, IN THE SUMMER OF 1950, THAT EDDIE MILLER MET PAT WALTON...

I'M *SURE* MY PLANT COULD *HANDLE* YOUR JOB, J.B.! *BESIDES!* I'VE GOT TO LOOK OUT FOR *MYSELF!* THESE *DEFENSE CONTRACTS* CAN'T LAST *FOREVER!* IT'S A DEAL!

LOOK, MILLER! I'M GIVING A LITTLE *PARTY* AT MY PLACE TONIGHT...

IT WAS AT THAT PARTY THAT PAT WALTON, YOUNG...BEAUTIFUL... AND CLEVER...WALKED OUT OF THE MELEE OF LAUGHTER AND MUSIC AND INTO EDDIE MILLER'S LIFE...

YOU'RE AN AWFULLY GOOD *DANCER*, MR. MILLER!

CALL ME *EDDIE!*

LOS ANGELES WAS A DIAMOND FIELD SPREAD OUT BELOW THEM, SPARKLING IN THE NIGHT, AS THEY LOOKED DOWN FROM THE TERRACE... PAT AND EDDIE...

IT'S A *LOVELY VIEW!*

BEAUTIFUL! AND I'M NOT LOOKING AT THE *LIGHTS*, PAT! I'M LOOKING AT *YOU!*

AND THE VALLEY, AND EDDIE'S FORTY YEAR OLD WIFE, LOUISE, SEEMED SO VERY FAR AWAY...

CAN I *SEE* YOU AGAIN, PAT? I'LL BE IN *TOWN* FOR A FEW MORE *DAYS! DINNER...?*

PICK ME UP AT *EIGHT... TOMORROW NIGHT!*

AND SO, EDDIE MILLER BECAME INFATUATED WITH THE YOUNG AND BEAUTIFUL PAT WALTON...

BUT *EDDIE*, HONEY! YOU'RE *MARRIED!* YOUR *WIFE...*

I'VE COME A *LONG WAY*, PAT! I'M A *DIFFERENT* EDDIE MILLER *NOW!* I WANT A DIFFERENT *LIFE!* I WANT *YOU...*

YES! THE ATOM BOMB HAD CHANGED THINGS FOR A LOT OF PEOPLE! IT HAD CHANGED THINGS FOR EDDIE MILLER...

DRIVING TO LOS ANGELES *AGAIN*, EDDIE? BUT I'VE MADE *PLANS* FOR THIS WEEKEND!

SORRY, LOUISE! BUSINESS IS BUSINESS! YOU GO AHEAD WITH YOUR PLANS... *WITHOUT* ME!

AND IN LOS ANGELES IN THE FALL OF 1951...

IT CAN'T GO ON LIKE THIS ANY LONGER, EDDIE! IT'S BEEN OVER A YEAR! IT'S EITHER *HER*... OR *ME*!

SHE'D *NEVER* GIVE ME A *DIVORCE*, PAT! *NEVER*!

IT'S... *HER*... OR *ME*, HONEY! MAKE UP YOUR *MIND*!

I'LL... I'LL THINK OF *SOMETHING*, BABY! LET'S *FORGET* ABOUT HER... FOR *NOW*...

THEN, ONE NIGHT, WHEN EDDIE AND LOUISE WERE ALONE, THINGS CAME TO A HEAD...

WHAT DO YOU *MEAN*, YOU'VE HAD ME *FOLLOWED*!

JUST WHAT I *SAID*, EDDIE! I KNOW ALL *ABOUT* THAT WOMAN IN LOS ANGELES!

OKAY! *OKAY*! SO NOW YOU *KNOW*! NOW WHAT ARE YOU GOING TO *DO* ABOUT IT! *DIVORCE*...

DIVORCE *YOU*? OH, *NO*, EDDIE! THAT'S WHAT YOU'D *WANT* ME TO DO! OH, *NO*! I'M *NOT* GOING TO GIVE *ALL THIS UP*... NOT THAT *EASILY*.

I WANT MY *FREEDOM*, LOUISE! I WANT TO MARRY *PAT*!

I WAS *GOOD* ENOUGH FOR YOU WHEN THINGS WERE *TOUGH*! *NOW* YOU'RE READY TO TOSS ME *ASIDE*! WELL, YOU'RE NOT *GOING* TO... TO...

I WANT OUT, LOUISE!

EDDIE! *EDDIE*... *DON'T LOOK AT ME LIKE THAT*! *EDDIE*...

SHE WAS DEAD! HE KNELT BESIDE HER BRUISED AND BATTERED CORPSE.
I'VE GOT TO GET RID OF HER BODY... HIDE IT WHERE THEY'LL NEVER FIND IT! I'LL SAY SHE LEFT ME... WHEN SHE FOUND OUT ABOUT PAT...
EDDIE STARED OUT OF THE RANCH HOUSE, OUT ACROSS THE VALLEY...
SOMEWHERE OUT THERE... SOMEWHERE IN THE BAD LANDS... IN THE DESERT! THEY CAN'T DIG UP THE WHOLE DESERT LOOKING FOR HER! NO BODY... NO MURDER! WHAT TIME IS IT?
LOUISE'S SHATTERED WATCH SAID ELEVEN-TEN. HE COULD DRIVE ALL NIGHT AND BE BACK BY DAWN... BEFORE THE SERVANTS RETURNED. HE LIFTED AND CARRIED HER OUT TO THE CAR...
I'LL PACK SOME OF HER THINGS SO IT'LL LOOK LIKE SHE LEFT IN A RUSH...
SOMEWHERE, OUT IN THE DESERT... OUT IN THE DARKNESS, SAFE FROM PRYING EYES... EDDIE DUG A HOLE...
NOT A SOUL FOR MILES! THEY'LL NEVER FIND HER HERE!
... AND BURIED LOUISE AND HER SUITCASE...
THERE! NOW TO GET BACK! I'LL CALL PAT AND TELL HER THE GOOD NEWS!
THE NEXT EVENING, PAT ARRIVED AT THE RANCH...
IT'S YOUR HOME NOW, BABY! LOUISE'S LEFT ME! SHE FOUND OUT ABOUT US! HAD ME FOLLOWED!
OH, EDDIE! IT'S BEAUTIFUL!
BUT TOWARDS MIDNIGHT...
WHAT THE... EDDIE! IT'S COPS!
HEY! YOU CAN'T BREAK IN LIKE THIS!
GET YOUR COAT, MILLER! YOU'RE COMING WITH US! YOU TOO, MISS WALTON!
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THE DETECTIVES TOOK THEM OUT...PAT AND EDDIE... AND PUSHED THEM INTO A CAR...

WHAT'S THIS ALL *ABOUT?*

WHEN DID YOU SEE YOUR *WIFE* LAST, MILLER?

L-LAST NIGHT! WE HAD AN *ARGUMENT!* SHE *LEFT* ME! SHE SAID SHE WAS GETTING A *DIVORCE!*

WHAT TIME DID SHE *LEAVE*, MILLER?

ABOUT...ABOUT *ELEVEN!* MAYBE A LITTLE AFTER!

YOUR WIFE WAS *MURDERED* AT *ELEVEN-TEN LAST NIGHT*, MILLER!

YOU *FOUND* HER *BODY?*

YOU SEEM *SURPRISED*, MILLER! YEAH! WE *FOUND* HER! SHE WAS *PRETTY BADLY BEAT-UP!* BUSTED HER *WATCH* AT *ELEVEN-TEN!*

SHE...SHE WAS *ALIVE* WHEN SHE *LEFT*... I *SWEAR* IT...

WE GOT *TIRE TRACKS* ... *FINGERPRINTS!* THE *WORKS!* YOU MIGHT AS WELL *CONFESS*, MILLER! IT'S OPEN AND SHUT!

EDDIE! YOU... YOU DIDN'T *KILL* HER!

I...I *DID* IT FOR *YOU*, PAT! OFFICER! *SHE* DIDN'T HAVE ANYTHING TO *DO* WITH IT! I *SWEAR* IT! BUT...*BUT*... *FOR GOD'S SAKE*...*HOW* DID YOU FIND HER *BODY?* *HOW* DID YOU KNOW TO *LOOK*... AND *WHERE*...?

IT WAS AN *ACCIDENT*, MILLER! *SOME PROSPECTOR FOUND HER AND DUG HER UP!* IT WAS THE *WATCH* THAT TRAPPED YOU! THE *RADIUM DIAL!* THE PROSPECTOR HAD A *GEIGER-COUNTER!* HE'D THOUGHT HE'D FOUND A *URANIUM DEPOSIT!* YOU KNOW ... *URANIUM*...THE STUFF THEY MAKE *ATOMIC BOMBS WITH!*

THE END

COME CLEAN!

IN A FEW MINUTES...AT EXACTLY *ELEVEN P.M.*... I AM GOING TO *DIE!* DOWN THERE...DOWN THAT CORRIDOR. . . BEHIND THAT LITTLE GREEN DOOR...IS THE *ELECTRIC CHAIR!* IT'S *WAITING* FOR ME... WAITING TO SEND *THOUSANDS OF VOLTS* THROUGH MY BODY...WAITING TO *EXECUTE* ME FOR A CRIME I DID NOT *COMMIT! YES!* A CRIME I *DID NOT COMMIT!* I'M *INNOCENT*...INNOCENT AS A *BABY!* BUT I *CAN'T PROVE IT!*

LISTEN! HEAR THAT? IT'S A *RADIO* PLAYING! REMINDS ME OF THE *JUKE-BOX* THAT WAS PLAYING THAT NIGHT IN *NICK'S SALOON*...THE NIGHT IT ALL *BEGAN!* I *REMEMBER* IT ALL... SO *CLEARLY!* I'D GONE INTO NICK'S FOR A *DRINK! SHE* WAS SITTING THERE...AT THE BAR... *BESIDE* ME...

SHE WAS ATTRACTIVE, IN A CHEAP SORT OF WAY! SHE HELD A CIGARETTE BETWEEN HER HEAVILY PAINTED LIPS EYEING ME WITH THAT 'YOU-CAN-BUY-*ME*-A-DRINK, TOO' LOOK! I SIT...

WE STARTED TO TALK! I LOOKED HER OVER! SHE WASN'T BAD FOR HER KIND! SHE TOLD ME HER NAME...

LILLIAN! LILLIAN SMITH! YOU CAN CALL ME LIL!

MINE'S RALPH JANSEN! HOW ABOUT ANOTHER REFILL, LIL?

SHE DRANK LIKE A FISH! AND SHE COULD SURE HOLD IT! HER EYES GOT A LITTLE BLEARY, BUT OTHERWISE SHE WAS OKAY! JUST A LITTLE GAY...

OOPS! ELEVEN-THIRTY! I GOTTA BE GOIN'! GET MY BEAUTY SLEEP, Y'KNOW!

I'LL WALK YOU HOME, LIL! MIND?

MIND? SHE PROBABLY WOULD HAVE SLUGGED ME IF I HADN'T OFFERED! LISTEN, I BEEN AROUND! I KNEW HER KIND WELL! SHE LIVED IN ONE OF THOSE BROWNSTONE HOUSES A COUPLE OF BLOCKS AWAY

WELL! THIS IS IT! ER... CARE TO COME UP FOR A NIGHTCAP?

I DON'T MIND!

LISTEN! HERE THEY COME! THEY'RE COMING FOR ME! IT'S TIME...

ALL RIGHT, GUARD! OPEN UP!

LET'S GO, JANSEN!

OH, LORD! IF I CAN ONLY THINK OF SOMETHING! SOME WAY TO PROVE I'M INNOCENT!

THE GUARD'S CLINKING HIS KEYS, TRYING TO PICK OUT THE ONE TO MY CELL! NOW HE'S RATTLING IT AROUND IN THE LOCK... JUST LIKE LIL DID WHEN SHE OPENED THE DOOR TO HER APARTMENT...

WELL... C'MON IN! TAKE OFF YOUR COAT...

NICE PLACE YOU GOT HERE, LIL! YOU... ER... LIVE HERE... ALONE...?

SHE LOOKED AT ME... YOU KNOW THE WAY... WITH ONE EYEBROW RAISED...

ALL ALONE, RALPH! SIT DOWN! I'LL GET INTO SOMETHING COMFORTABLE!

WHERE'S THE LIQUOR? I'LL MIX UP THE DRINKS!

SHE WAVED AT A SMALL CABINET AND WENT INTO THE BEDROOM! I STARTED MIXING THE DRINKS! WHEN SHE CAME OUT, SHE WAS DRESSED IN A REAL SEXY HOUSE COAT! I KNEW THIS WAS IT...

SAY! DON'T YOU LOOK TERRIFIC! ER... HERE'S YOUR DRINK!

THANKS, RALPH! SIT DOWN! RELAX! I'LL TURN ON THE RADIO...

WE'RE COMING TO THE END OF THE CORRIDOR NOW! THE WARDEN'S RAPPING ON THAT LITTLE GREEN DOOR...

YES, SIR! WE'RE READY

INSIDE, JANSEN!

WHAT *IS* IT? WHAT IS IT I'VE *FORGOTTEN?*

...JUST THE WAY LIL'S LANDLADY KNOCKED ON *HER* DOOR THAT NIGHT! SHE POINTED TO THE RADIO...

YOU'LL HAVE TO *TURN THAT DOWN,* MISS SMITH! I'VE HAD A *COMPLAINT!*

OKAY! OKAY!

...AND THEN THE LANDLADY SAW ME SITTING THERE! SHE WAS REAL SARCASTIC...

OH, I BEG YOUR *PARDON,* MISS SMITH! I DIDN'T *KNOW* YOU HAD *COMPANY!*

G'NIGHT, MRS. WOODMAN...

IT MUST HAVE BEEN THREE A.M. WHEN I FINALLY GOT OUT OF THERE! LIL STOOD IN HER DOORWAY, HER HAIR STRINGY, HER MAKE-UP GONE! I FELT A LITTLE SICK AS I TIP-TOED DOWN THE STAIRS...

GOOD-NIGHT, LIL! I'LL...SEE YOU AROUND!

YEAH! SURE! G'NIGHT...

BUT *NOBODY SAW ME LEAVE!* I *SWEAR* IT! I DIDN'T SEE *HIDE* NOR *HAIR* OF THAT NOSEY *LANDLADY!* AND LIL WAS *ALIVE* WHEN I LEFT HER! I *KNOW* IT...

SIT DOWN, JENSEN!

SOMETHING! IF I CAN ONLY *THINK* OF IT!

THEY'RE TELLING ME TO SIT DOWN IN THE DEATH SEAT! LIKE WHEN THE COPS SHOWED UP AT MY FLAT ALMOST A WEEK LATER...

WHAT'S UP? I DIDN'T DO ANYTHING!

SIT *DOWN,* JANSEN!

IT'S ABOUT *LILLIAN SMITH,* WE THINK YOU *MURDERED* HER!

MURDERED HER! I ONLY *MET* THE DAME *ONCE*... ABOUT A *WEEK* AGO! IT WAS... *THURSDAY* NIGHT!

THURSDAY NIGHT! THE *NIGHT* SHE WAS *STRANGLED!* KEEP YOUR COAT ON! WE'RE GOIN' *DOWNTOWN!*

THEY'RE STRAPPING ME IN NOW! OH, LORD! I DIDN'T DO IT! YOU KNOW I DIDN'T DO IT! HELP ME TO REMEMBER...

...HELP ME...

HUH? YOU SAY SOMETHIN', JANSEN?

GET HIS SLEEVE, BEN...

MY SLEEVE! THEY'RE RIPPING MY SLEEVE! MRS. WOODMAN, LIL'S LANDLADY, TOUCHED MY SLEEVE DOWN AT HEADQUARTERS...

THAT'S THE MAN! I SAW HIM IN HER ROOM! ABOUT MIDNIGHT! AND THAT'S THE COAT! HE WORE THAT COAT!

WHAT'S SHE TALKING ABOUT? SURE I WAS [redacted] HER ROOM THAT NIGHT! BUT I DIDN'T KILL HER!

WATCH YOURSELF, JANSEN! FROM NOW ON, ANYTHING YOU SAY CAN BE USED AGAINST YOU!

AND THEN, I GOT THE STORY...

THAT'S RIGHT! ABOUT MIDNIGHT, I WENT UP TO HER ROOM TO TELL HER THE RADIO WAS ON TOO LOUD! HE WAS THERE! THEY WERE DRINKIN'...

ARE YOU SURE IT WAS THIS MAN, MRS. WOODMAN?

POSITIVE! I GOT A GOOD LOOK AT HIS FACE! IT WAS THE FIRST TIME I'D SEEN HIM! OH, THERE'D BEEN LOTS OF OTHERS! SHE WAS NOTHING BUT A...

GO ON, MRS. WOODMAN...

THEN, ABOUT FOUR IN THE MORNING, I HEARD A SCREAM! HE CAME RUNNING DOWN THE STAIRS AS I CAME OUT OF MY APARTMENT...

YOU GOT A GOOD LOOK AT HIM...?

HE TRIED TO COVER HIS FACE, BUT I SAW THAT COAT OF HIS! IT WAS HIM, ALL RIGHT!

NO! NO! I LEFT THERE ABOUT THREE! I SWEAR IT! IT MUST'VE BEEN SOMEBODY ELSE!

IS THIS YOUR COAT, JANSEN?

YES... BUT...

THAT'S THE COAT ALL RIGHT! GREY TWEED! I'D KNOW IT ANYWHERE! IT WAS HIM...

NOW THEY'RE STRAPPING ME IN! OH, LORD, IF I COULD ONLY CONVINCE THEM...

I DIDN'T DO IT!

SHUT UP, JANSEN! YOU'VE HAD YOUR TRIAL!

THE TRIAL! YES, I REMEMBER THAT...

AFTER MRS. WOODMAN DESCRIBED THE DEFENDANT, WE BEGAN SEARCHING THE NEIGHBORHOOD! WE SPOTTED THE DEFENDANT WEARING THE COAT! HIS DESCRIPTION FIT!

SO WHAT DID YOU DO, CAPTAIN?

WE WAITED OUTSIDE HIS PLACE ONE NIGHT WITH MRS. WOODMAN! SHE DEFINITELY RECOGNIZED THE DEFENDANT AS THE MAN SHE SAW WITH MISS SMITH THE NIGHT OF HER MURDER... SO WE PICKED HIM UP...

THAT WILL BE ALL, CAPTAIN!

IT WAS AN OPEN AND SHUT CASE! WHEN THE D.A. CROSS-EXAMINED ME...

YOU SAY YOU LEFT MISS SMITH'S APARTMENT AT 3 A.M.! WHERE DID YOU GO?

RIGHT HOME!

DID ANYBODY SEE YOU... ANYBODY WHO CAN TESTIFY THAT YOU WERE ON YOUR WAY HOME BEFORE FOUR A.M.?

NO, SIR! NOBODY SAW ME! BUT I'M TELLING YOU THE TRUTH!

AND THIS IS YOUR COAT, MR. JANSEN!

YES, SIR!

YOU ALWAYS WEAR IT!

YES, SIR!

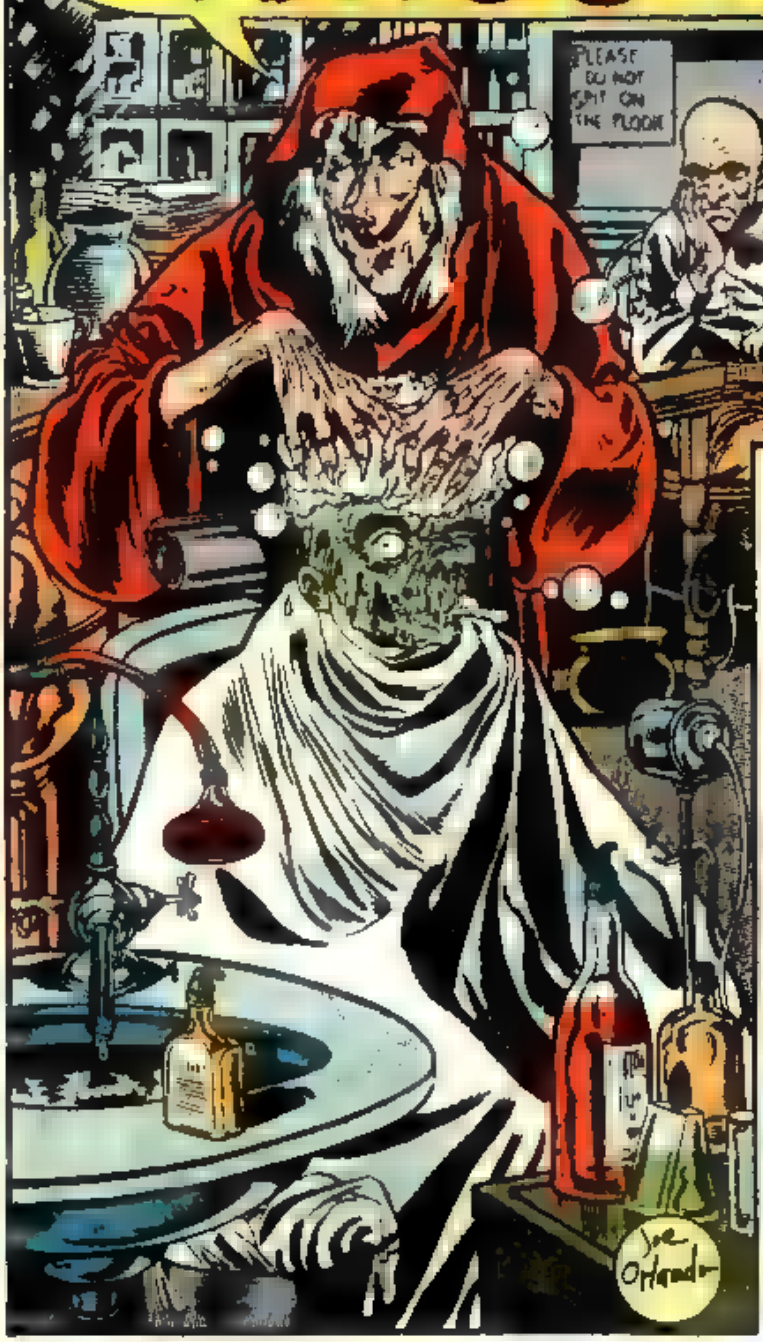
LADIES AND GENTLEMEN OF THE JURY. THE DEFENDANT WAS SEEN IN MISS SMITH'S APARTMENT AT MIDNIGHT! AT FOUR A.M., MISS SMITH SCREAMED. A MAN WEARING THIS COAT WAS SEEN LEAVING MISS SMITH'S APARTMENT BY MRS. WOODMAN. WHEN MRS. WOODMAN GOT TO MISS SMITH'S APARTMENT, SHE FOUND HER DEAD! I DON'T THINK THERE IS ANY DOUBT THAT...

THE JURY DELIVERED THE VERDICT AFTER A QUICK DELIBERATION...
WE FIND THE DEFENDANT, RALPH JANSEN, GUILTY OF MURDER AS CHARGED...
THERE MUST BE SOMETHING I'VE FORGOTTEN. SOME WAY TO PROVE I DIDN'T DO IT...
HOLD STILL, JANSEN! PUT ON THE SPONGES, BEN!
YOU'VE GOT TO BELIEVE ME!
THE SPONGES! I... I REMEMBER SPONGES.
SORRY, MR. JANSEN! YOU'LL HAVE TO LEAVE THE COAT HERE! I CAN'T GET THAT SPOT OUT!
OKAY, MR SUTTON! WHEN WILL IT BE READY?
I REMEMBER! MR. SUTTON USED A SPONGE TO TRY TO REMOVE THE STAIN I'D GOTTEN ON MY COAT... MY GREY TWEED COAT...
IT WON'T BE READY BEFORE FRIDAY, MR. JANSEN!
OKAY, MR. SUTTON! S'LONG!
FRIDAY! IT WASN'T READY TILL FRIDAY! OF COURSE! I WASN'T WEARING MY GREY TWEED COAT THE NIGHT LILLIAN SMITH WAS MURDERED...
I WAS WEARING MY OLD BLUE ONE! THE GREY ONE WAS BEING CLEANED!
OKAY!
LET 'ER GO, SAM!
THEY'RE PRESSING THE BUTTON...SENDING THOUSANDS OF VOLTS INTO ME...
STOP! MY GOD...STOP! I JUST THOUGHT OF IT...
HE'S DEAD!
JUST LIKE EVERY ONE OF 'EM! DENIED IT TO THE LAST!
THE END

THE HAUNT OF FEAR

HEE, HEE! SO IT'S *GUEST-SPOT TIME* AGAIN FOR ME! YEP...IT'S YOUR HOSTESS IN *THE HAUNT OF FEAR*, *THE OLD WITCH*, STIRRING MY *CRUDDY CAULDRON* AGAIN, READY TO LADLE OUT ANOTHER *LIVID, LURID, LUNCHEON*...ANOTHER *TASTY TALE OF TERROR!* SO, COME *IN*, KIDDIES! HOLD OUT YOUR *MESS KIT*, AND I'LL FEED YOU MY LATEST *MESS!* I *CALL* THIS *HORROR HELPING*...

WHO'S NEXT?



THERE WAS SOMETHING WRONG. TONY *KNEW* IT. ANNA HADN'T SAID A WORD TO HIM AT BREAKFAST. THE SILENCE THAT HUNG OVER THE KITCHEN WAS INTERRUPTED ONLY BY THE TINKLING OF THE DISHES, AS TOAST WAS BUTTERED AND COFFEE POURED AND EGGS SCRAPED OUT OF THE FRYING PAN. TONY LOOKED AT ANNA AND THERE WAS SADNESS IN HIS EYES...

TONY ATE QUIETLY, STUDYING HIS LOVELY WIFE. HE WAS LUCKY, TONY WAS, TO HAVE SUCH A LOVELY WIFE. ALMOST TWO YEARS THEY'D BEEN MARRIED. AND THEY'D BEEN SUCH *HAPPY* YEARS FOR TONY. BUT LATELY...

YOU...YOU ARE SO *QUIET*, ANNA! THERE IS SOMETHING *TROUBLING* YOU?

THERE'S *NOTHING* TROUBLING ME, TONY! *EAT!* IT'S GETTING *LATE!*

TONY DRAINED THE LAST DROP OF COFFEE FROM HIS CUP AND STOOD UP. ANNA SEEMED RELIEVED...

LAST NIGHT! SOMETHING BOTHERED YOU *TOO!* WE... DIDN'T...

I WAS *TIRED* LAST NIGHT, TONY! THAT'S ALL!

TONY TOOK HIS HAT AND STARTED TOWARD THE FRONT DOOR. ANNA FOLLOWED, SILENTLY. HE TURNED TO HER...TO KISS HER GOODBYE. SHE BACKED OFF...

ANNA! I...

IT'S ALMOST *EIGHT*, TONY! YOU'LL BE *LATE*...

IT WAS A BRIGHT SUNNY DAY. TONY TRUDGED DOWN THE STREET TOWARD TOWN. PEOPLE PASSING HIM NODDED OR GREETED HIM CHEERFULLY. BUT TONY DID NOT SEE THEM OR HEAR THEM. TONY'S THOUGHTS WERE BACK AT HIS HOUSE...WITH ANNA...

SHE IS *ANGRY* WITH ME! I HAVE *DONE* SOMETHING! I HAVE *HURT* HER...

I SAID G'MORNIN', TONY!

TONY STOPPED BEFORE THE FRONT DOOR OF THE SHOP. THE MORNING SUN DANCED ON THE GOLD LETTERS IN THE WINDOW AND REFLECTED OFF THE RED AND WHITE POLE SUNK IN THE SIDEWALK. TONY PULLED OUT HIS KEYS AND UNLOCKED THE DOOR...

HEY, YOU'RE *LATE* TODAY, TONY! WHAT *HAPPENED?* *OVERSLEEP?*

OH! I AM *SORRY*, MR. SPORDMAN! Y-YES! I *SLEPT LATE!* COME IN! I MAKE IT QUICK!

TONY CLOSED THE DOOR BEHIND THEM AND LIFTED THE SHADE. MR. SPORDMAN SAT DOWN IN THE SINGLE WHITE CHINA CHAIR WITH THE GREEN LEATHER SEAT AND BACK. TONY TOOK OFF HIS JACKET, ROLLED UP HIS SHIRT SLEEVES AND PUT ON HIS WHITE COAT...

ONCE OVER LIGHTLY... AS USUAL...

YES, MR. SPORDMAN! SURE THING!

TONY'S DAY HAD BEGUN! SOON, OTHER MEN BEGAN ARRIVING FOR THEIR MORNING SHAVES. SMALL BOYS, LED OR PUSHED BY THEIR MOTHERS, CAME IN SHYLY. A STRANGER OR TWO SAT DOWN, THUMBED THROUGH A MAGAZINE, WAITING. CUSTOMERS CAME AND WENT. TONY WAS BUSY...

HOW'S ANNA, TONY?

SHE'S FINE, MR. REILLY! JUST FINE!

THE SCISSORS LICKED THEIR CHOPS, SWALLOWING UP GREAT MOUTHFULS OF HAIR... THE RAZOR SCRATCHED HUNGRILY, SCRAPING AWAY THE WHITE FOAM TEAMING WITH A MILLION BLACK FACE-HAIRS... THE CHAIRS BEHIND TONY, LINING THE WALL, WERE EMPTIED AND FILLED... EMPTIED AND FILLED...

MUCH OF A *WAIT*, TONY?

HUH? OH! *THREE... FOUR AHEAD* OF YOU, MR. BARKER! *COME IN!* IT WON'T BE *LONG!*

MR. BARKER STOOD IN THE BARBER SHOP DOORWAY, SCOWLING AT THE WAITING CUSTOMERS...

I'LL... I'LL BE *BACK*, TONY! HOW... HOW *LONG* DO YOU THINK THEY'LL *TAKE*?

AN *HOUR*, MR. BARKER! I'LL BE THROUGH AN *HOUR*.

MR. BARKER WENT AWAY. TONY SHOOK HIS HEAD AND WENT BACK TO CUTTING MR. FAGEN'S HAIR...

THAT MR. BARKER. HE'S *ALWAYS IN A HURRY! HE NEVER* WANTS TO *WAIT!*

TOO *BAD* ABOUT HIM, TONY! JUST BECAUSE HE'S THE *BANK PRESIDENT*...

CUSTOMERS CAME... SAT... WAITED... WERE CUT OR SHAVED... AND LEFT! THE DAY WORE ON. SOON, IT WAS CLOSING TIME...

GOOD-NIGHT, TONY!

GOOD-NIGHT, MR. RIFFLE!

TONY WALKED HOME SLOWLY. IT WAS GETTING DARK. HE TURNED THE KEY IN HIS FRONT DOOR...

ANNA? I'M HOME...

ANNA LOLLED ON THE COUCH. SHE DIDN'T EVEN LOOK UP. TONY BENT OVER HER...

ANNA? DON'T YOU EVEN *KISS ME HELLO* ANY MORE?

OH, TONY! CUT IT *OUT, WILL* YOU?

ANNA! WHAT *IS* IT? WHAT HAS *HAPPENED* TO US?

LEAVE ME *ALONE, WILL* YOU? GO EAT YOUR *SUPPER!* IT'S ON THE *TABLE!*

THE EVENING CRAWLED INTO THE NIGHT. THEY SAT IN SILENCE, ANNA STARING OUT THE WINDOW... TONY READING HIS PAPER, LOOKING AT HER FROM TIME TO TIME...
YOU... YOU FEEL ALL RIGHT, DON'T YOU, ANNA?
I'M FINE, TONY!
THE CLOCK ON THE MANTEL CHIMED ELEVEN. ANNA STOOD UP...
I'M TIRED! I'M GOING TO BED!
I'LL BE RIGHT UP, ANNA!
A FEW MINUTES LATER, TONY CAME INTO THE BEDROOM. ANNA'S EYES WERE CLOSED. HE LEANED OVER HER, TOUCHING HIS LIPS TO HER CHEEK. SHE TURNED AWAY...
I SAID I'M TIRED, TONY! PLEASE...
I... I'M SORRY, ANNA! I ONLY THOUGHT...
THE NEXT MORNING AT BREAKFAST... THE SAME ANGRY LOUD SILENCE. TONY HARDLY ATE. ANNA STARED AT NOTHING. TONY GOT UP...
MAYBE WE GO TO A MOVIE TONIGHT, EH, ANNA? FOR A CHANGE...
IF YOU LIKE...
TONY SHRUGGED AND LEFT. ON THE WAY TO THE SHOP, HE PASSED THE FLORIST...
TONIGHT I BUY FLOWERS FOR ANNA! THEN MAYBE, WHATEVER I DID, SHE FORGIVE ME...
ANOTHER DAY. THE CUSTOMERS... THE CLIPPINGS... THE SHAVING CREAM...
NICE WEATHER WE'RE HAVING, EH, TONY?
EH? UH... YES... NICE WEATHER!
MUCH OF A WAIT, TONY?
IT WAS MR. BARKER AGAIN. HE STOOD IN THE DOORWAY... SMILING...
OH! MR. BARKER! YOU DIDN'T COME BACK YESTERDAY!
I GOT BUSY, TONY! OH! I SEE THERE'S A FEW AHEAD OF ME! I'LL BE BACK! LATER!

MR. BARKER WENT AWAY. TONY WENT BACK TO WORK...
ALMOST EVERY DAY THIS WEEK HE COMES IN! HE'S ALWAYS IN A HURRY! NEVER WANTS TO WAIT!
YOU OUGHT TO RESERVE A SPOT JUST FOR HIM, TONY!

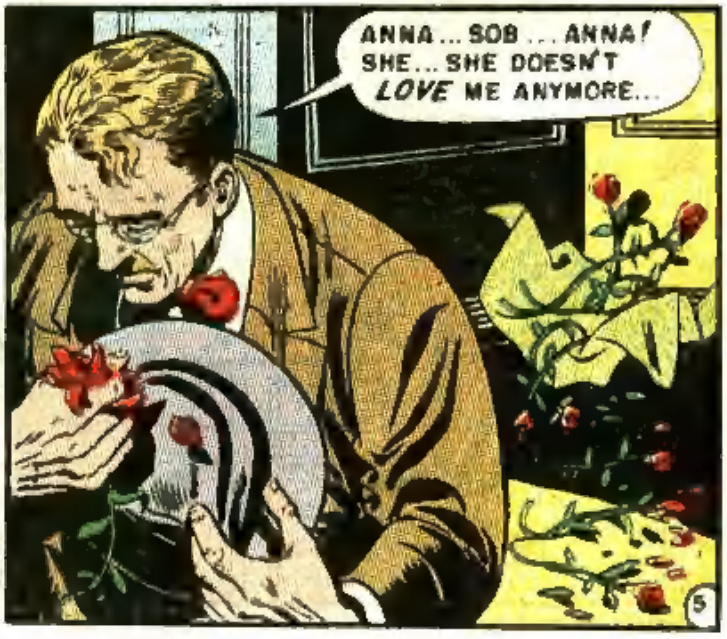
FIRST COME...FIRST SERVED, IN THIS SHOP! OKAY! YOU'RE NEXT, MR. COOPER...
THANKS TONY! HERE Y'ARE!

THAT EVENING...
WHAT'LL IT BE, TONY?
A DOZEN ROSES, MIKE! MAKE 'EM NICE, EH? THEY'RE FOR MY ANNA!

BUT ANNA DIDN'T SEEMED PLEASED WITH THE ROSES TONY BROUGHT...
YOU...YOU DON'T LIKE THE FLOWERS, ANNA?
THE'RE NICE, TONY! WHAT DO YOU WANT ME TO SAY?

YOU...YOU USED TO TELL ME HOW MUCH YOU LOVE ME, ANNA!
STOP IT, TONY! FOR GOD'S SAKE, LAY OFF...

ANNA! WHERE ARE YOU GOING? THE MOVIE...
GO TO THE MOVIE YOURSELF! I'M GOING TO BED!


ANNA...SOB...ANNA! SHE...SHE DOESN'T LOVE ME ANYMORE...

THE NEXT DAY WAS LIKE ALL THE OTHERS FOR TONY! THE CUSTOMERS CAME...TWO OR THREE AT A TIME... AND WAITED. TONY WATCHED MR. BARKER COME OUT OF THE BANK AND CROSS THE STREET...
MUCH OF A WAIT, TONY?
WHY YOU NOT COME BACK YESTERDAY?
I GOT BUSY AGAIN!
SO WHAT CAN I DO? THERE'S THREE AHEAD OF YOU! AN HOUR... AT LEAST...
THAT'S ALL RIGHT! I'LL BE BACK...
WHY DON'T YOU SIT DOWN AND WAIT, MR. BARKER? MR. BARKER...
MR. BARKER WAS GONE. TONY SPAT...
BIG SHOT! SO BUSY!
HEY, TONY! MR. BARKER DROPPED HIS WALLET! LOOK...
TONY PICKED UP THE WALLET! HE RUSHED OUT OF THE SHOP...
MR. BARKER! MR. BARKER...
MR. BARKER WAS FAR UP THE STREET... OUT OF EARSHOT. HEADED OUT OF TOWN...
I...I'LL TRY TO CATCH HIM...
TONY RAN AFTER HIM! MR. BARKER WAS WALKING SWIFTLY! SUDDENLY MR. BARKER TURNED IN AT A HOUSE... A VERY FAMILIAR HOUSE...
THAT'S FUNNY! HE... HE GOES INTO MY HOUSE! WHAT DOES HE WANT WITH...WITH...

TONY WATCHED THE WHOLE THING WITH TEAR-FILLED EYES THROUGH A SIDE WINDOW BEHIND SOME SHRUBBERY. HE SAW ANNA GREET MR. BARKER...THROW HER ARMS ABOUT HIM...KISS HIM TENDERLY...

HE'S BUSY! WE'VE GOT A *GOOD HOUR*...

DARLING! HOLD ME... *KISS* ME...

HOW *CLEVER* OF MR. BARKER TO CHECK UP ON TONY.. TO SEE THAT HE HAD PLENTY OF CUSTOMERS TO KEEP HIM BUSY.. SO HE AND ANNA COULD BE TOGETHER.. FREE FROM THE FEAR OF BEING INTERRUPTED! TONY WATCHED FOR A WHILE.. THEN TURNED AWAY WHEN HE COULD STAND IT NO LONGER...

ANNA...SOB... *ANNA!*

THE NEXT DAY, TONY ENTERED THE BARBER SHOP.. BUT HE DID NOT RAISE THE SHADE. HE WANTED NO CUSTOMERS THAT DAY. HE JUST WAITED...

FINALLY, MR. BARKER CAME OUT OF THE BANK. TONY LIFTED THE SHADE AND OPENED THE DOOR...

ER...MUCH OF A *WAIT*, TONY? *TONY?*

THE DOOR SLAMMED BEHIND MR. BARKER! TONY STOOD THERE, GRINNING! IN HIS HAND, AN OPEN RAZOR POINTED AT THE BARBER CHAIR...

NO WAIT, MR. BARKER! *YOU'RE NEXT...*

MR. BARKER'S HYSTERICAL SHRIEKS OF PAIN DREW PEOPLE TO THE BARBERSHOP WINDOW! THEY GAZED IN HORROR AS TONY WIELDED HIS RAZOR...

GOOD LORD!

CHOKE...

HEE, HEE! AND SO, MR. BARKER'S ILLUSTRIOUS *BANKING CAREER* WAS SUDDENLY *CUT SHORT*...BY *TONY'S STRAIGHT RAZOR*. AS FOR *ANNA*...WELL, TONY'D TAKEN CARE OF *HER TOO*...THE *NIGHT BEFORE*...WHEN HE'D GOTTEN HOME. HE'D *BOBBED HER HAIR*...WITH AN *AXE*. WELL... THAT ABOUT WINDS UP ANOTHER SCREAM-SNACK IN THE *HAUNT OF FEAR*. I'LL FEED YOU NEXT IN V.K.'S MAG, THE VAULT OF HORROR! 'BYE, NOW! BUY E.C.!

THE END...